

**TRANSITION TO ADULT LIVING  
IMPLEMENTATION TEAM MEETING  
JUNE 2, 2004  
MINUTES**

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS—**

Mike Richardson called the meeting to order and welcomed all attendees. A special welcome was extended to Governor Olene Walker, Robin Arnold-Williams, Executive Director of the Department of Human Services and Raylene Ireland, Executive Director of the Department of Workforce Services.

**OVERVIEW—**

Raylene Ireland thanked Governor Walker for her support of the Transition to Adult Living Initiative and outlined the progress that has been made during the past six months. Ms. Ireland mentioned that the Department of Workforce Services and the Department of Human Services had been working closely together on the initiative and had certainly appreciated the many other community partners who were working hard to improve services to foster youths. It was an effort by many public and private partners.

**VISION/GOALS/DATA—**

Robin Arnold-Williams gave a Power Point presentation outlining the vision and goals of the initiative and the data showing the need for improvement in the lives of youth exiting the foster care system. The overall vision is—"Youth who age out of foster care will live successfully as adults."

The Utah data shows many of the problems encountered by these former foster youths during the past five years—unemployment, poverty level jobs, high pregnancy rates, high crime rates and other poor outcomes.

Ms. Arnold-Williams explained that each of the goals of the initiative was designed to improve these outcomes and have youth who are prepared to make successful transitions into adult living.

**REPORTS ON TASKS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF TASK GROUPS—**

Marie Christman updated Governor Walker on the pilot project that is already underway in the Northern Region with DCFS, DYC and DWS. The project officially starts on July 1<sup>st</sup>. At least 50% of the WIA-Youth slots have been allocated to this project. Proposed ETV (Education Training Vouchers) Rules have been passed by the DCFS Board and will become an Emergency Rule soon.

Jane Lewis reported on the Life Skills group and the upcoming implementation of the Ansell-Casey Assessment Tool. The Tool is evidence based, strengths based and best of all—it's free. Jane explained how the assessment provides the worker with the information that is needed to help prepare a youth for independent living. A specific curriculum is also included.

Kelly Colopy reported that the Website would be available in August. Through focus groups with youth around the state, they were able to design a website with the information the youths feel would be most helpful. The youth clearly said they want it to be a “normal youth” website rather than a “foster-care” website. Special emphasis is on Job/Financial, Housing, and Health information.

Richard Anderson briefly reported the progress of the other Task Groups. He related information about the Providers Association meeting he had attended this morning and found that the providers were very willing partners to this initiative and wanted to look at the long-term views with the youth in care.

Richard reported that the Housing group is looking at several ideas to promote affordable housing such as—obtaining reduced rent for youth, getting their names on the waiting list at age 16 for housing subsidies, making agreements with foster parents who have rental space in their basements, and risk-sharing with DCFS so landlords won't lose money if the youth cannot pay rent one month.

The Mentoring group has focused on having a stable adult involved in the lives of each youth and are currently preparing RFP's to provide model pilot mentoring programs in two areas of the state. There will be a senior mentoring program and another one with adults of all ages participating as mentors. It was mentioned that UFosterSuccess is also starting a mentoring program.

Richard reported that the Physical & Mental Health group will focus on retaining Medicaid cards for each youth until age 19. (Medicaid Newborn Plus) Also, there are hopes of extending Medicaid coverage until age 21. The costs are being estimated at this time. The group is also focusing on teaching youth to self-manage their own health and mental health needs through classes and groups provided by nurses and by NAMI. (National Alliance for the Mentally Ill.)

The Transportation group has written a DCFS Practice Guideline outlining the expectation that youth in foster care will have driver's education and obtain a driver's license whenever possible. There was some discussion in the meeting today regarding liabilities and roadblocks some youth encounter in this process. It was also suggested that Public Transportation should not be overlooked as a solution for some youth.

Richard explained that the Transitional Support Fund has been established to pay for a variety of needs the youth have as they are preparing for independent living. This will help fund a couple of pilot programs as well as individual needs of a youth—for school, work, housing, etc.

Robin Arnold-Williams then explained to Governor Walker that Utah's involvement with NGA (National Governor's Association) is helpful in removing barriers and keeping us focused on collaboration and positive outcomes.

#### **GOVERNOR WALKER'S REMARKS—**

After the task group reports, Governor Olene Walker thanked each of the participants and responded by saying "You are on track and doing a great job! It's amazing what you've done." She reminded the group about the important role of education and urged everyone involved to keep working on these important goals. Governor Walker then stayed for several other questions and comments from the group.

#### **GROUP DISCUSSION AND SUGGESTIONS—**

Kathy Dimick suggested giving each State Employee an hour per week off work to donate their services to be a mentor.

LeRoy Franke suggested that the System still holds youth too tightly until age 18—then sets them free ill-prepared to meet the world. He reminded what the youth told us at the Youth Summit last summer—"Don't treat us as broken, damaged kids."

Jim Anderson thanked the Governor for her invaluable support of this initiative and asked how we could get the help of the new Governor next year. Governor Walker responded that she would be willing (after the Primary election) to brief the candidates about the initiative and seek to get them on board. She wanted to work with us to keep this important initiative moving.

Following this discussion, Governor Walker was thanked again for her support and attendance today, and then she; Raylene Ireland and Robin Arnold-Williams were excused to attend to other duties.

#### **DISCUSSION OF "STEPS TO INDEPENDENT LIVING" CHART AND THE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN—**

During the last hour of the meeting the discussion centered around the "Steps to Independent Living" chart that showed tasks that need to be accomplished at each age (or stage) of a youth's life in order to help prepare him/her for independent living.

Some suggestions were:

- The Ansell-Casey Assessment Tool can be used at an early age and needs to be adapted to meet individual needs.
- Be sure to bring providers and foster parents on board early in the process—especially in order to allow for youth to have more "hands-on" experiences.

- Don't "test" kids too high. If they are scoring only 5%--the test is likely too high. Stacy Brubaker has a series of questions and situations she uses in order to more accurately assess youth.
- Medication (and administering medication) is a big issue that may need to be addressed in policy—lock-up vs. allowing youth access to their own medications.
- The "steps" chart should be looked at only as a partial list of things that need to be done before youth exit the system.

Two foster youths from Utah County attended the meeting today. Both young women, Jackie and Sheila, were congratulated for their accomplishments and the tremendous progress they are making. Both young ladies made comments and contributed insights into things that should be considered by the group.

The 10-page Implementation Plan was distributed and Mike Richardson asked that each Chair and each Task Group member look carefully over the plan during the next few weeks to add, delete, or modify the things that are contained in the plan. The goal is to get each task as specific and clear as possible in order to get the work properly assigned and implemented.

Several suggestions that were shared by group members are the following:

- Use the DCFS Training Team to assist with "roll-out" and implementation of the plan due to their experience in dealing with large training projects. Contact Midge Delavan.
- Completion dates are needed—please try to keep things on the "fast-track" but be realistic with what can be done. Prioritize the dates.
- Make sure that the IL Coordinators, supervisors, caseworkers, youth, foster parents or other knowledgeable people have had the opportunity for input before anything is finalized.
- A marketing/outreach plan is needed for the whole implementation plan.
- A training and cross training plan is also needed.

All group members were asked to either submit their comments and suggestions to either their Task Group Chair or to Amanda Singer by June 30<sup>th</sup>. Amanda's email address is [asinger@utah.gov](mailto:asinger@utah.gov).

#### Task Group Chairs:

Marie Christman	Emp./Trng/Edu.	<a href="mailto:mchristman@utah.gov">mchristman@utah.gov</a>
Richard Walker	Housing	<a href="mailto:rewalker@utah.gov">rewalker@utah.gov</a>
Jane Lewis	Life Skills	<a href="mailto:jhlewis@utah.gov">jhlewis@utah.gov</a>
Lisa McDonald	Mentoring	<a href="mailto:lisa@utahfostercare.org">lisa@utahfostercare.org</a>
Vicki Cottrell	Physical & MH	<a href="mailto:cottrell@xmission.com">cottrell@xmission.com</a>
George Delavan	Physical & MH	<a href="mailto:gdelavan@utah.gov">gdelavan@utah.gov</a>
Herman Hooten	Trans. Support	<a href="mailto:hmhooten@utah.gov">hmhooten@utah.gov</a>

Amanda Singer  
Kelly Colopy

Transportation  
Website

[asinger@utah.gov](mailto:asinger@utah.gov)  
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### **Special Guests Attending:**

Governor Olene Walker  
Robin Arnold-Williams  
Raylene Ireland

### **Implementation Team Members and Support Staff Attending:**

Richard Anderson  
Mike Richardson  
James Anderson  
Marie Christman  
Vicki Cottrell  
Daniel Dayton  
Richard Dimick  
Barbara Feaster  
Ron Harrell

Lisa McDonald  
Mary Shumway  
Savania Tsosie  
Richard Walker  
Jane Broadhead  
Herman Hooten  
Amanda Singer  
Barbara Thompson

### **Task Groups Members and other Guests Attending:**

Sheila (youth)  
Jacky (youth)  
Terry Feveryear  
Pam Russell  
Ken Hull  
David Evans  
Jane Lewis  
Amy Feveryear  
Melissa Larsen  
Terri Harris  
Kelly Colopy  
Barbara Drake  
Kathy Dimick

Ann Foster  
Stacy Brubaker  
Irina Pierpont  
Rebecca Banner  
Thor Nilsen  
Chris Chytraus  
Patti Van Wagoner  
Bonnie Athas  
Bob Haywood  
Tim Holm  
LeRoy Franke  
Katie Gregory  
Mary Lou Emerson